



## **Social Media Policy/Guidelines**

### **Introduction**

The use of online social and business sites e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, YouTube, LinkedIn and all other public online communications is now commonplace and used by people to maintain contact with friends as well as being employed in certain circumstances as a work tool. As a proactive and innovative organisation, the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council actively welcomes and supports the use of these tools, as they help in publicising and raising awareness of the work we do.

However, there have been a few cases where the use of social media has harmed the reputation of an organisation or its employees and volunteers. This policy is intended to help us and volunteers avoid potential pitfalls.

If information on any of the sites we use raises concern for you, you must contact the chair.

### **Scope and Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to minimise risks to our organisation using social media.

This policy deals with all forms of social media including but not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, Wikipedia, Instagram, and Tumblr.

This policy outlines the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council expectations of its staff/volunteers regarding the use of social or business media.

### **Breaches of the Policy**

Whether accessed at work or at home, the following can result in disciplinary action:

Any reference, direct or indirect, on social or business networking sites, blogs or other such sites, to the organisation, employment, individuals or organisations, or funding partners and members that could cause the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council reputation to be damaged;

Or

Use of a site that contravenes Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council policy or an illegal site.

Or

Use of a site where Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council or your individual duty of confidentiality is breached, where the dignity at work of colleagues and volunteers are undermined or the values of the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council are compromised, where any other policies of the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council are breached.

### **Use of Social and Business Network Sites**

Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our policies. If an internet post would breach any of our policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum.

**Best interests:** You are expected, when using social and business networking sites and the internet, to act in all situations in the best interests of the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council.

**Disrepute:** You must not use sites in such a way that the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council interests or reputation is or may be damaged whether directly or indirectly.

You must not use social media to defame or disparage the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council, our volunteers or any third party; to harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against volunteers or third parties; to make false or misleading statements; or to impersonate colleagues or third parties.

**Confidentiality:** You are not to refer to or publish contact details or pictures of any staff, volunteers, members, supporters, children, or young people without obtaining express written permission to do so from the parties concerned.

Confidential information is defined as any information that is described as such by the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council. This shall include any personal information, embargoed press releases, and any information, not legitimately available to the public, which relates to the commercial, financial and other activities of the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council.

Information shared on social and business networking sites, or personal blogs, even in private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and defamation laws and may give rise to claims against an individual or the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council.

**Remember:** Once you make a comment online it is extremely difficult to remove the comment.

**Dignity at work:** Sites should not be used to abuse, ridicule, bully, harass, intimidate staff, volunteers, members or supporters, children or young people or stakeholders e.g. defamatory, threatening, harmful, homophobic, or obscene comments. The privacy and feelings of others should always be respected.

**Contacting children and young people:** Under no circumstances should social or business networking sites be used inappropriately by you to contact children, young people.

**Illegal file sharing:** Sites should not be used by you for accessing or sharing illegal or inappropriate content at any time.

**Values:** Under no circumstances should members of staff make any comments or post items, photos or materials that compromise The Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council.

Be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that you are personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see.

**Privacy:** You must carefully consider your privacy settings, and that initially private postings may not remain so.

**Offensive Material:** You must not access pornographic, sexually explicit, religious hatred, any material which may be construed as discriminatory or other unsuitable material or download such material onto the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council IT and other equipment, or in any way associate the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council with such material.

Any breach of this policy or misuse of social networking sites or the internet may result in disciplinary action. You may be required to remove or be refused access to any social media that the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council consider to constitute a breach of this policy.

***If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from posting it. If you see social media content that disparages us or reflects poorly on us, you should contact the Chairperson.***

If you wish to report any suspected wrongdoing in relation to a suspected breach of this policy, please refer to the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council Whistle blowing Policy.

### **Monitoring**

This policy is designed to reduce risks to both the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council' activities and reputation that might occur because of inappropriate use of social or business networking sites and personal blogs. Users must be aware that the use of the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council IT systems, including the internet and email, can be monitored and electronically logged.

We reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including, but not limited to, social media postings and activities, to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your use of such resources and systems.

Signed



**Dated:** 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Minute Reference:** 10/23/99.7